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Merry-Go-Round

Bobby Kennedy's Run For the White House

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WHEN Senator Robert F. Kennedy was a small boy, his father drilled into him and his brothers the idea that one of them was to become president of the United States. Old Joe Kennedy was a persistent papa.

His eldest son, Joseph P. Kennedy Jr., was killed during World War II, but later Joe saw his second son, John F. Kennedy, attain this dream, only to see him shot down before the end of his first term.

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THE night of the assassination, the Kennedy clan met in the White House until a very late hour planning how to get the White House back in the hands of a Kennedy.

It was then that a book was discussed telling the facts of the assassination. The book, "The Death of a President," by William Manchester, distorted many of the facts, especially the report that Lyndon Johnson had inveigled John F. Kennedy into going to Texas.

The facts were just the opposite. But the bitterness shown by Bobby and the refusal of Jackie ever to set foot in the White House while the Johnsons occupy it have given wide circulation to this myth.

Obviously this led to the deepening of the bitterness between Bobby Kennedy and the man he would like to replace.

Actually, the Bobby-Johnson feud had begun long before President Kennedy's assassination. Probably it began on that fateful day in Los Angeles when the Democratic Convention nominated John Kennedy for president and when he, a practical politician, realized that in order to win he needed a strong running mate. When he tapped Lyndon Johnson, it was against the advice of his brother.

Mr. Johnson, a restless and dynamic former Senate Majority Leader, was most unhappy as vice president. And what contributed to his unhappiness was a series of newspaper articles which many in Washington suspected came from Bobby Kennedy telling how Mr. Johnson was a fifth wheel.

The public knew little about the bitterness but those inside the Administration did.

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AFTER the tragedy of Dallas, Bobby Kennedy disappeared for several days. No man mourned the death of his brother more than the man who was determined eventually to succeed him.

When it became apparent that Bobby wanted to run as vice president in 1964, President Johnson drew the line. He did not want the man who hated him most serving as his vice president. So on the recommendation of Clark Clifford, he called Bobby in and told him that he was going to bar as vice president anyone who was serving in the cabinet.

Bobby was furious. He resigned from the cabinet, and jumped into the New York senate race to win a place which would keep him in the public eye. He has been in the public eye ever since, determined eventually to achieve his father's ambition and put a Kennedy back in the White House.

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